Volume 23 Issue 4
December 2023

North Unit Irrigation District

Newsletter

Manager's Message

As we conclude the 2023 Irrigation Season, I look back at the challenges that patrons and district staff have endured. Lower allotments equal lower water flows, which equals reduced efficiencies due to absorption and trans evaporation. Patrons have been forced to fallow fields, resulting in abundant weeds within the district, which creates challenges for district operations and patrons. Couple the lack of water with inflation, labor shortages, and increasing operating costs, and you have a historically challenging situation! I want everyone to know that the NUID Board and staff are doing everything possible to lessen the impact of these conditions.

NUID staff are hard at work this off-season, having completed construction of approx. 1,500 feet of 24-inch HDPE pipe on lateral 45-2. This pipe installation is a significant upgrade to an 80-year-old concrete siphon that had significant leaks. Proceeds from an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Grant funded this project.

Over four years of work have culminated in the approval of plans, funding, and cultural resource requirements for Segment 1 of the Lateral 43 Pipeline Project, referred to as the PL-566 Project. The District Board of Directors has awarded the construction contract to Tapani Inc. from Battle Ground, WA. Tapani crews began demolition on November 27, 2023, and are hard at work prepping the site for the installation of approximately 6,000 feet of 66-inch HDPE Pipe and a screening structure at the head-end. As part of in-kind contributions, NUID crews will reconstruct Lateral 43-1, including 15 associated deliveries. We anticipate being able to run water by the end of next March, with final grading complete by the end of April. The worksite is near Haystack Reservoir between SW Jericho LN and SW Irving LN. I ask you to please stay clear of the area but frequent the NUID website for project updates and photos.

https://www.northunitid.com/modernization-in-the-deschutes-basin

Consistent with prolonged drought conditions, the inflows into Wickup Reservoir are still down significantly. As of December 13, Wickiup Reservoir contains 77,898 Acre Feet (AF) of its 200,000 AF capacity. At this same time last year, Wickup had 62,373 AF. The historical fill average for this time of year is 103,000 AF. The natural flow in the Deschutes River is also roughly 100 cfs lower than the historical average. Although we're seeing more water in Wickiup to date, partly due to more end-of-season carryover, remnants of the dry and drought years remain prevalent.

All eight Central Oregon Irrigation Districts are busy piping their systems this offseason! This is a huge milestone and means that the many years of collaboration and hard work are beginning to pay off. What this means for NUID is that as these piping projects are completed, there will be more conserved water available for NUID during the Irrigation Season. In turn, NUID will release the conserved water in the winter to meet Habitat Conservation Plan requirements. NUID, in coordination with our partners, has brought in over $150 million to the Deschutes Basin. However, more work is needed to secure the additional funding to modernize irrigation districts. We feel strongly that modernizing the irrigation infrastructure in Central Oregon is crucial to NUID's future success.

We await the Lake Billy Chinook Appraisal and Jefferson County Economic Study reports, and will publish the reports when completed.

Finally, NUID was recently awarded $5 million from the Oregon Water Resources Department. This allotment will be used as match funding to accompany the $25 million PL-566 federal funds awarded in 2020 to construct the Lateral 43 Pipeline project. We have applied for additional grants to upgrade the NUID Fish Screens in Bend, pursue hydroelectric opportunities, offset patron incurred water meter costs for the Lateral 43 Pipeline project, and will continue to pursue drought relief opportunities as they are presented.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We will provide another update at the 2024 Jefferson County Farm Fair.

Sincerely,

Josh Bailey

Board Member Election Results

This year Division 1 and Division 2 positions were open for Election. One petition was received for Division 1 from Ryan Boyle and one petition for Division 2 was received from Mike Kirsch. No other petitions were received. Boyle and Kirsch both ran unopposed and were elected to serve another 3-year term starting January 1, 2024. Please join us in congratulating Ryan Boyle and Mike Kirsch on their re-election!

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Water Leasing Program – 2024

The Deschutes River Conservancy and North Unit Irrigation District are partnering to offer their water leasing program again in 2024. Each year of an in-stream lease counts as a year of beneficial use, thereby preserving the validity of your water right. You may lease all or part of your irrigation rights, but the entire area being leased must remain dry for the duration of the instream lease.

For more information or to sign up, contact NUID (541-475-3625), nuid@northunit.com **before March 5, 2024**. Earlier notification is encouraged to allow time to prepare the documents. **Please note: You are still responsible for your assessment, which must be paid in full before your lease can be approved.**

Town Hall

On October 12, 2023 NUID hosted its season-end Town Hall at the Jefferson County Fair Grounds. If you missed it, you can view the video by clicking on the link below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UihT6xMGHjs

Ownership Changes

Ownership changes due to marriage, divorce, death, establishing trusts, LLC's, etc. must be reported to the district once processes are finalized. It is important that the district's records are kept current and match the ownership documents recorded with the county. These changes can directly affect those water users that are required to complete Reclamation Reform Act certification forms and can delay the delivery of water until records are brought current. Please update the district as these changes occur.

Temporary Water Right Transfers

For several years now the district has been participating in a pilot project for temporary transfers of water, which allows a landowner to dry up a piece of land and move the water right to another parcel for the water season. If you plan to participate in a temporary transfer in the future please contact the District office for a list of requirements and procedures.

District Right-of-Ways/Easements

Tis the season for maintenance and general upkeep of the irrigation project. District canals, laterals, service roads and control devices are within specified Right-of-Ways (RoW) established by the Bureau of Reclamation when the irrigation project was constructed. The RoW's were established to allow the District to operate, maintain and repair the irrigation project works. Landowners and water users may not encroach or prevent the district from accessing these lands. Please keep these RoW areas clear of buildings, fences, equipment, etc. in order to prevent delays and damage in performing district maintenance operations. Maps of RoW widths are available at the district office. Please call in advance to request copies of maps. Keep in mind that tree and woody vegetation removal from canals and easements is also part of routine operations and maintenance.



Office Closure Dates

The district office will be closed for the holidays beginning at noon on December 22 through December 25, 2023. The office will also be closed at noon on December 29, 2023 through January 1, 2024.

Management:

Josh Bailey, District Manager
jbailey@northunitid.com
Mike Britton, Executive Manager
mbritton@northunitid.com
Gary Calhoun, Operations Manager
gcalhoun@northunitid.com
Dennis Krueger, Watermaster & Construction Supervisor
dkrueger@northunitid.com
Leslie Maynard, Finance Manager
lmaynard@northunitid.com

Office Staff:

Michelle Camphouse
mcamphouse@northunitid.com
Collin Cowsill Water Operations
ccowsill@northunitid.com
Julia Turek
jturek@northunitid.com
Pam Watson-Tolman
pwatson@northunitid.com

Board of Directors:

Division 1: Ryan Boyle, Vice Chair
Division 2: Mike Kirsch, Chairman
Division 3: Ryan Feigner
Division 4: Evan Thomas
Division 5: Vern Bare

Office Hours:

Irrigation Season

Monday - Friday	8:00 - 5:00
Saturday	8:00 - 4:00

Non Irrigation Season

Monday - Friday	8:00 - 4:30

Phone: (541) 475-3625
Fax: (541) 475-3905
Email: nuid@northunitid.com
Website: www.northunitid.com

Local/ Regional News

North Unit gets $5 million for modernization
https://www.madraspioneer.com/news/north-unit-gets-5-million-for-modernization/article_d18931ea-8991-11ee-b162-8334b6c7c27a.html

Central Oregon emerges as a state leader in utility solar energy production
https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/central-oregon-emerges-as-a-state-leader-in-utility-solar-energy-production/article_0b57ce69-2d55-5980-b635-504b2e9e2f37.html

New USDA Hardness Zones
https://www.capitalpress.com/nation_world/nation/new-plant-hardiness-map-shows-higher-temps/article_ff0a3abc-8d90-11ee-bb73-9be9da98f800.html

Piping for local irrigation projects made locally
https://www.madraspioneer.com/piping-for-local-irrigation-projects-made-locally/article_a9587eaa-79d4-11ee-9743-f3d0e66e4b07.html

Federal government sends $4M to restore Central Oregon's Crooked River
https://www.opb.org/article/2023/11/29/central-oregon-crooked-river-deschutes-river-basin-prineville-ochoco/

Equipment Rental

Remember to schedule your equipment rental jobs before March 1, 2024 in order to allow District staff time to complete your project prior to the 2024 irrigation season. Contact Dennis Krueger for arrangements.

Click the link before for more information.
https://northunitid.com/equipment-rental/

Farm Fair Information

The 44th annual Central Oregon Farm Fair is scheduled for February 7th & 8th (Thursday & Friday), 2024 from 9am - 4pm at the Jefferson County Fair Grounds. Be sure to stop by the NUID booth!

For program information go to:
http://jeffcoseed.com/farm-fair/



2024 Explanation of Charges:

The following charges are billed in December and become delinquent April 15, 2024:

Operation & Maintenance Charge (O&M) $70.18 / acre
This charge is for the operation & maintenance of the district and includes items such as building, canal, auto, and equipment repairs and maintenance. It also includes wages, taxes, safety, training, weed control, and other miscellaneous expenses necessary for the district to maintain its infrastructure and deliver water. The charge varies yearly and is dependent upon the budget adopted by the board of directors.

Account Charge $225 / account
The district implemented an account charge in 2005. The charge covers administrative costs incurred by the district staff when performing name changes, balance transfers, easements, maps, and other miscellaneous items for patrons.

Legal $6.46 / acre
The district established a legal assessment to cover the costs of the HCP, Oregon Spotted Frog litigation, Crooked River Legislation, and the public relations support, communication, and marketing for these issues.

Construction $2.35 / acre
This charge is a repayment to the Bureau of Reclamation for the construction of the project.

Safety of Dams
The Bureau of Reclamation completed a modification on Wickiup Dam and the district is required to pay $5,766,972 of the total cost, over a 30-year period. Repayment is $6.00 per acre with an additional account charge of $15.18 per account for any landowner with 10 acres or less of water rights. Only Deschutes water right acres are subject to this charge.

Excess $42.11 1st ft, $49.13 2nd ft
At the end of the water season, usage over your minimum is calculated and bills for excess water are sent towards the end of October and become delinquent April 15th of the following year. This is required under the district's contract, with the Bureau of Reclamation. If available, this allows a minimum of 2.0-acre feet of water per acre on Deschutes water rights and 1.0-acre foot per acre on Crooked River water rights before excess will be charged.